



DOVER/KENT COUNTY MPO TECHNICAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE
MINUTES OF OCTOBER 12, 2011

Technical Advisory Committee Representatives attending:

Mary Ellen Gray, Kent County Planning (Chair)
Ann Marie Townshend, City of Dover, Planning & Insp.
Scott Koenig, City of Dover, Public Works
Joe Zilcosky, DE Economic Dev. Office
Tricia Faust, Dover Air Force Base
Terry Reilly, Transp. Mgmt. Assoc. DE

David Edgell, Office of State Planning (Vice-chair)
Karen Brittingham, DelDOT Planning
Cathy Smith, Delaware Transit Corporation
Milton Melendez, DE Dept. of Agriculture
Marc Dixon, Federal Highway Administration
Donald Tinari, for Cheswold, municipal rep.

Members not attending:

Tim Riley, Kent Conservation District
Phil Wheeler, DNREC
Rick Crawford, Norfolk Southern
Gary Norris, City of Milford

Dave Hugg, Town of Smyrna
Byard O'Neal, DE Motor Transport Assoc.
Ryan Long, Federal Transit Admin.

Non-members attending:

Terry Tieman, City of Harrington
Rich Vetter, MPO Exec. Director
Kate Layton, MPO Staff
Catherine Samardza, MPO Staff

Robert Kleinburd, DelDOT
James Galvin, MPO Staff
Chris Kirby, MPO Staff

1) Introduction of Members & Guests

Ms. Terry Tieman is the new City Manager for Harrington.

2) Public Comments

3) ACTION ITEM: Approval of Agenda

MOTION By Ms. Townshend to approve the agenda. Seconded by Mr. Koenig. Motion carried.

4) ACTION ITEM: Approval of Minutes – August 10, 2011

Ms. Smith asked that the minutes be amended to read that a Route 13 bus stop at the Cheswold Walmart was in construction. It is not already in place.

MOTION By Mr. Koenig that the minutes be approved with the above amendment. Seconded by Ms. Reilly. Motion carried with five (5) abstentions (not present at August meeting).

5) DISCUSSION AND ACTION ITEM: FY 2012 – 2015 TIP Amendments – Jim Galvin

Mr. Galvin explained that, although the TAC voted to recommend Council approve these amendments in August, there had been no information or amendment forms submitted by DelDOT. The forms and information were now available. In addition, without the forms, the 2012 amendments had not been published. The 2011 amendments that were passed in August were submitted with forms and published. There was some discussion as to the correct wording of the motion to approve.

MOTION By Ms. Townshend to recommend Council approve the amendments pending public comments. Seconded by Mr. Koenig.



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Ms. Brittingham asked that the motion clarify that this action is being taken to satisfy form and procedure. Ms. Townshend amended her motion.

MOTION By Ms. Townshend to recommend Council approve the amendments pending public comments, noting that the appropriate forms and procedures have been observed. Seconded by Mr. Koenig. Motion carried.

6) **DISCUSSION ITEM: MPO Bicycle Plan – Rich Vetter**

- Silver Lake to Isaacs Branch Connector & Big Oak Park Connector
- Bicycle Committee

Mr. Vetter reported that \$5M has been allocated by the General Assembly for bicycle projects. The MPO is working with others to assure that some of the money will be used in Kent County. He reported that he would be meeting with the City of Dover, DNREC and DelDOT next week to discuss the Silver Lake/Isaacs Branch Connector. This is an off-road trail that is the top recommendation in the recently adopted Regional Bicycle Plan published by the MPO. The MPO is taking the lead in this project, coordinating meetings with the public and institutions along the proposed trail. Ms. Gray was pleased that the RBP was just adopted, and already implementation was happening. Mr. Vetter thought it was very good publicity. Ms. Townshend said she thought the public process would be interesting. Mr. Vetter introduced Chris Kirby, who is now on staff full time, who would be working on this project.

Mr. Vetter asked if TAC members thought the MPO should have a bicycle subcommittee, similar to WILMAPCO's Non-Motorized Working Group. He read the Working Group statement. He also asked if there were actually enough projects to justify a standing committee or working group that would meet every other month. TAC members had questions about the difference between a working group or a sub-committee. Ms. Samardza explained the legal requirements for a committee versus a working group. Mr. Edgell suggested the MPO start small, with a working group, and see if it would grow to be a standing committee. It was suggested that staff research a list of interested groups or individual that should be on the working group. Mr. Vetter also said that he would attend WILMAPCO's working group meeting later in the month.

7) **DISCUSSION ITEM: MPO Transportation Studies - Rich Vetter**

- Transportation Improvement District (TID) Study

There are eleven (11) growth areas in the Kent County Comprehensive Plan that the County would like to develop transportation plans for. The MPO and the County met with DelDOT in August and drafted a letter of agreement, which is being reviewed by DelDOT. The MPO would assist Kent County in gathering data. This study is on hold right now, awaiting DelDOT's comments on the agreement.

- Central Kent Study

The MPO is coordinating with DelDOT on this study, which is an attempt to get "ahead of development" in the area. The area is a "mini" TID that requires a master plan, given that there are 2700 approved lots in a rural area. Part of the area is in Smyrna. Mr. Edgell said that there are agreements in place with the developers, but nothing is moving forward. There was discussion concerning some of the improvements that developers had agreed to, including a "boulevard" for Rabbit Chase Lane.

- Cheswold Town Center

Mr. Vetter reported that he met with Cheswold's Planning Commission in September. The study would cost about \$50,000, with Cheswold providing a \$10,000 match. This is a lot of money for Cheswold; DelDOT has agreed to provide the match through the MPO agreement. (Former) Mayor Tinari reported that the Town's legal problems have resulted in a settlement that will require them to sell Town property to meet. Even then, it will only result in a partial payment. At this time, Cheswold cannot move ahead with this study. Ms. Gray asked if the MPO could move forward when the town is ready; Mr. Vetter said that the money was in the work program and would be there when the Town is ready.



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- Smyrna Gateway

Mr. Vetter reported that Smyrna wants to look at their northern “gateway” at the boundary of New Castle County (Duck Creek and US13). They are interested in “branding” the Town, with landscaping, signage and set-backs. This plan is in the very early stages of development, and the MPO could provide assistance if requested by the Town.

- DTC Studies

The MPO is working with DTC on three studies:

- Park & Ride
- Age restricted communities
- Bus route origin/destination

Mr. Vetter distributed a summary sheet regarding age-restricted communities and whether or not they are served by transit. Ms. Smith said that, depending on future funding, DTC would look at these communities for infrastructure improvements, accessible pedestrian pathways, and multi-modal transportation (bikes and buses). She knew that DTC would not be involved in all of the possible improvements, just the transit-oriented ones. In particular, she felt it was important to keep talking about land use, so that communities that needed public transit would be built either on existing routes, or where routes could be established.

Ms. Gray noted that there is already criticism for the configuration of the bus stop at the new Cheswold Walmart. Ms. Smith reported that WalMart did not build the stop as requested by DTC; WalMart moved the stop and did not inform DTC until it was too late to change it back.

Ms. Gray asked if the “quality of life” mailing from Kent County was going to the correct person at DTC. Ms. Smith noted that often DelDOT or another agency will “check off” on a plan, but DTC is not notified of changes. However, DTC gets criticized. There was further discussion concerning notification. Ms. Smith said that DTC is on the PLUS list; Ms. Townshend noted that not everything goes to PLUS. Ms. Gray said she would contact Ms. Smith regarding proper notification.

Mr. Edgell noted that the Complete Streets policy makes transit a priority. Ms. Smith said that although WalMart is a major destination, cars are still a priority for transportation engineers; buses are only about one per hour compared to private vehicles. Ms. Townshend noted that at the WalMart scoping meeting, there was bike/ped information, but no transit. Mr. Vetter asked if there is actually a requirement for a development (such as a 55+ community) to put in a bus stop if there is a bus route goes right by them. Ms. Gray said there was no requirement for that type of community, but there review and notifications for other types of development. She felt that coordination could be better. Mr. Galvin said that since the MPO is a member of PLUS, there was an opportunity to represent DTC at those meetings. Ms. Townshend asked if vehicle counts were done, and if bus ridership could reduce vehicle trips. No one present had an answer for this.

8) **PRESENTATION: DelDOT Noise Policy – Robert Kleinburd, DelDOT**

Mr. Kleinburd gave a Powerpoint presentation outlining the new Noise Policy. He answered questions as they occurred in the presentation. He noted that whether or not noise barriers are built comes down to two questions: 1) should you and 2) can you; build them. There are noise contour lines and decibel ranges for both developed and undeveloped areas that are considered. If a developer builds within a contour line after it has been established in an undeveloped area, DelDOT is not required to build a noise barrier. Mr. Kleinburd also said that the complete policy is available on DelDOT’s website.

9) **Committee Report: Data and Demographics Sub-Committee – Jim Galvin**

- **ACTION ITEM: Approval of Updated Employment Projections (enclosures)**

Mr. Galvin reviewed the materials sent to the TAC, explaining the methodology and reasons behind the numbers. The Data and Demographics Subcommittee felt that these projections not only conformed to the Population Consortium figures, but



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were realistic based on current employment and trends in Kent County.

MOTION By Ms. Townshend to recommend Council approve and adopt the employment projections developed by the Data and Demographics Subcommittee. Seconded by Mr. Melendez. Motion carried.

10) Committee Report: Priority Process Working Group - Jim Galvin

Mr. Galvin reported that the working group met twice and was reviewing scoring. The MPO received a call from DelDOT inviting staff to review a new software program, Decision Lens, that could possibly change the priority process. Mr. Galvin said that it was an interesting piece of software, but the working group would still have to discuss criteria for the program. He felt that there were still questions to be answered, but reported that the system does not arbitrarily weight criteria; it develops its own matrix for comparison. It used 6 categories rather than the 12 in the MPO process, but Mr. Galvin felt that this made sense, since some of the MPO criteria were alike.

The original plan was to have finished the priority process review by now, to use for the Regional Transportation Plan update. However, EPA has extended the March 2012 deadline. The MPO still plans to get started on the RTP update anyway. Mr. Galvin said that nominations for problems to be addressed would be open to the TAC and the public. Nomination forms would be sent out soon.

Ms. Smith asked if DelDOT has purchased the program. Ms. Brittingham said that DelDOT was still reviewing the software, but hoped to purchase it and make it available to the MPO and WILMAPCO.

It was also noted that the extended deadline would give DNREC time to develop a budget for the MOVES model that EPA was requiring.

Staff reported that the Hazletville Road connector was presented to the Air Quality Conformity Working Group for review. It was determined not regionally significant.

11) Member Agency Reports:

City of Dover: Planning – Ms. Townshend reported that Michael Albert left the City of Dover for North Carolina. He will not be replaced, and she does not have an alternate at this time. Her staff is down by 25%. The Downtown Dover Partnership has received \$3 Million from the General Assembly. It will be used for 3 projects on North Street: parking lots to improve function and circulation; Rehab North Street with Streetscape improvements; and create a Plaza/Parking area at the Collegian site that has fronts on both Loockerman and North Streets. It will be treated as one project.

Public Works – NO REPORT

Kent County Planning – Ms. Gray reported that she is working with the MPO and DelDOT on the TID studies. She hopes it will move forward soon.

Kent Conservation District – NO REPORT

Milford; Smyrna; Harrington; Other Municipalities – NO REPORTS

Dover Air Force Base – NO REPORT

TMA DE- NO REPORT

Delaware Motor Transport Association / Federal Transit Administration / Norfolk Southern – NO REPORTS

Federal Highway Administration – Mr. Dixon reported that FHWA and FTA approved the STIP and the MPO TIP.

State of Delaware: DelDOT Planning – Ms. Brittingham reported that she has been working with Mr. Vetter and Mr. Dixon to assure compliance with federal regulations governing the MPO procedures.

DTC – Ms. Smith reported that 2011 resort ridership was only down 4% despite storms, a hurricane, tornado, tropical storm and the economy. She also reported that there would be a service change on December 4th.

DNREC – NO REPORT

Agriculture – Mr. Melendez reported that as development slows down, participation in Ag programs shoots up. He announced that the development rights for 47 properties were purchased for preservation so far, and he expected more next week. He also announced that a Young Farmers Program would begin making loans next year.

Statewide Planning – Mr. Edgell reported that OSPC's annual report would be made to the Governor and the



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General Assembly at the end of the month. He said that building permits and development info was included in the report, and it indicated that trends were not going up. The report also focused on master planning for Milford and Georgetown, going beyond land use to include infrastructure.

DEDO – Mr. Zilcosky reported that the Kent County Economic Summit would take place on November 9 at Del Tech.

12) Staff Report –

12.1 Outreach Activities – Kate Layton

Ms. Layton reported that the website received a total of 3,417 “hits.” The website is getting referrals from the FaceBook page, AMPO and APA. The MPO participated in the Amish Bike Tour, and had bike maps and copies of the draft Regional Bicycle Plan available. Harrington Heritage Day was postponed due to the hurricane, and the rain date would be October 22.

12.2 UPWP Progress & Financial Reports – Rich Vetter

12.3 Correspondence & Publications/Reports – Rich Vetter

13) Next Meeting: December 7, 2011

MOTION By Mr. Edgell to adjourn the meeting. Seconded by Mr. Zilcosky. Motion carried.